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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4104  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 000091

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EU SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH VIEWS ON FEBRUARY GAERC AGENDA ITEMS

Classified By: Polcouns Marc Koehler for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

(C) On February 11, Swedish MFA EU Deputy Correspondent Jonas Wendel gave poloff the following information on agenda items for the upcoming February 24-25 GAERC:

External Relations Session

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-- Afghanistan: Sweden would like discussion of Afghanistan postponed again because it is too early to arrive at a decision on the EU's contribution to Afghanistan. Wendel said EUPOL is having problems recruiting in all member states and is currently investigating possible responses.

-- MEPP: Swedish PM Reinfeldt and FM Bildt have publicly called for full opening of the Gaza border to allow in humanitarian aid. Wendel said Netanyahu is a "divisive" figure among EU members and the results of the election could alter the current general agreement among members to "be careful" in their public comments. On the proposed international donors' conference in Cairo on March 2, Sweden views Egypt has having a leading role politically and within the donor community. The Council conclusions of January still stand and Sweden does not see a reason for a new set of conclusions.

-- Sudan: Now that the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Sudan President Bashir, the GAERC will adopt conclusions in support of the Court's action.

-- Western Balkans: Wendel said the Commission should already have accepted Montenegro's membership application and started on its "opinion." "Membership fatigue" accounts for the slow process, said Wendel, and some of the members are purposefully putting the issue on the backburner for tactical reasons (not to strengthen the anti-EU forces in Serbia) or for financial reasons (EU cannot afford to enlarge right now). Sweden believes the issue should not be politicized.

-- Eastern Partnership: The February GAERC is the latest possible meeting at which the EaP can be endorsed in time to be presented at the March Summit. Sweden drafted the proposal with Poland and is its principal supporter in the EU.

Potential February Agenda Items

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-- The GAERC might generate general conclusions ("A Point") on Sri Lanka and Iraq. Any A Point on Iraq would be to welcome the outcome of local elections.

Future Agenda Items

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-- Iran: Iran is likely to be on the agenda in May. The PSC will debate the topic after the EU3 meeting in Germany.  
SILVERMAN